

U.S. Appl. No. 09/878,581
Reply to Final Office Action dated June 29, 2006

Expedited Examination Response Under 37 C.F.R. §1.116

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IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. An identifier indicating the status of each claim is provided.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, said image content providing method comprising the steps of:
 - requesting distribution of said image content from said image content reproducing apparatus to said image content providing apparatus;
 - registering said image content by attaching a content owner identifier to said image content;
 - distributing an advertisement insertion charge to a content owner based on the content owner identifier;
 - transmitting said image content to said image content reproducing apparatus and detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in said image content at said image content providing apparatus;
 - requesting an advertisement image providing apparatus having said advertisement image to distribute said advertisement image from said image content providing apparatus;
 - selecting said advertisement image to be inserted to said image content and transmitting thereof to said image content providing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus; and

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distributing said advertisement image at the position of inserting said advertisement image when said image content is distributed from said image content providing apparatus to said image content reproducing apparatus, and
selecting the advertisement image based on viewer information set at the image content reproducing apparatus such that a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

2. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein when said image content is requested to distribute at said image content reproducing apparatus, said image content is selected and requested to distribute based on a title list which is information for viewing said distributable image contents to be transmitted from said image content providing apparatus.

3. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein the position of said image content for inserting said advertisement image is detected based on advertisement inserting condition data having an advertisement image inserting position condition for designating the position of inserting said advertisement image and an advertisement image selecting condition for designating a category of said advertisement image capable of being inserted to said image content.

4. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 3, wherein said advertisement inserting condition data includes an advertisement image

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reproducing condition for designating a maximum period of time for reproducing said advertisement image when said advertisement image is inserted to said image content.

5. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 3, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, said advertisement inserting condition data is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said advertisement inserting condition data.

6. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein when said image content is requested to distribute at said image content reproducing apparatus, viewer information of a viewer for utilizing said image content is transmitted to said image content providing apparatus.

7. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 6, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, said viewer information is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said viewer information.

8. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein said image content providing apparatus comprises:

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a main image content distributing apparatus; and
a plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatus;
wherein said main image content distributing apparatus selects one of the deputy image content distributing apparatus from said plurality of deputy image content distributing apparatus by a request of distributing said image content from said image content reproducing apparatus and said selected deputy image content distributing apparatus distributes said image content to said image content reproducing apparatus.

9. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 1, wherein said image content providing apparatus comprises:

a main image content distributing apparatus; and
a plurality of image content distribution splitter nodes;
wherein when said main image content distributing apparatus is requested to distribute said image content, said main image content distributing apparatus selects said image content distribution splitter node and distributes said image content to said image content distribution splitter node and said image content is distributed from said image content distribution splitter node to said image content reproducing apparatus.

10. (Currently Amended) An image content providing method of providing an image content from an image content providing apparatus to an image content reproducing apparatus, said image content providing method comprising the steps of:

requesting to provide said image content from said image content reproducing apparatus to said image content providing apparatus;

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registering said image content by attaching a content owner identifier to said image content;

distributing an advertisement insertion charge to a content owner based on the content owner identifier;

providing said requested image content from said image content providing apparatus to said image content reproducing apparatus;

detecting a position of inserting an advertisement image in said image content when said image content is reproduced at said image content reproducing apparatus;

requesting to distribute said advertisement image from said image content reproducing apparatus to an advertisement image providing apparatus having said advertisement image to be inserted;

selecting said advertisement image to be inserted to said image content and distributing thereof to said image content providing apparatus at said advertisement image providing apparatus; and

reproducing said advertisement image when the position of inserting said distributed advertisement image is reached in reproducing said image content at said image content reproducing apparatus, and

selecting the advertisement image based on viewer information set at the image content reproducing apparatus such that a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

11. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 10, wherein when said image content is requested to distribute at the image content reproducing

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apparatus, said image content is selected and requested to distribute based on a title list which is information for viewing said distributable image contents to be transmitted from said image content providing apparatus.

12. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 10, wherein the position of said image content for inserting said advertisement image is detected at said image content reproducing apparatus based on advertisement inserting condition data having an advertisement image inserting position condition transmitted from said image content providing apparatus for designating the position of inserting said advertisement image to said image content and an advertisement image selecting condition for designating a category of said advertisement image capable of being inserted to said image content.

13. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein said advertisement inserting condition data includes an advertisement image reproducing condition for designating a maximum period of time for reproducing said advertisement image when said advertisement image is inserted to said image content.

14. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, said advertisement inserting condition data is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said advertisement inserting condition data.

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15. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein when said advertisement image is requested to distribute at said image content providing apparatus, viewer information of a viewer utilizing said image content is transmitted to said advertisement image providing apparatus and when said advertisement image is selected at said advertisement image providing apparatus, said advertisement image is selected based on said viewer information.

16. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein said image content is provided by said image content providing apparatus by subjecting said image content to download distribution to said image content reproducing apparatus.

17. (Original) The image content providing method according to claim 11, wherein said image content is provided by said image content providing means by transmitting an information recording medium recorded with said image content to said image content reproducing apparatus.

18. (Currently Amended) An image content providing system comprising:
an image content providing apparatus having an image content and having a function of providing said image content;
an advertisement image providing apparatus having an advertisement image to be inserted to said image content and having a function of providing said advertisement image;
an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of reproducing said image content and said advertisement image;

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wherein said image content providing apparatus has a function of inserting the advertisement image transmitted from said advertisement image providing apparatus to said image content and providing said image content and said advertisement image to said image content reproducing apparatus; and

an image content registering apparatus for registering said image content by attaching a content owner identifier to said image content,

wherein an advertisement insertion charge is distributed to a content owner based on the content owner identifier, and

wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information set at the image content reproducing apparatus and a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

19. (Currently Amended) An image content providing system comprising:
- an image content providing apparatus having an image content and having a function of providing said image content;
- an advertisement image providing apparatus having an advertisement image to be inserted to said image content and having a function of providing said advertisement image;
- an image content reproducing apparatus having a function of reproducing said image content and said advertisement image;
- wherein said image content reproducing apparatus has a function of acquiring said advertisement image from said advertisement image providing apparatus and inserting said advertisement image to said image content and reproducing thereof; and

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an image content registering apparatus for registering said image content by
attaching a content owner identifier to said image content,
wherein an advertisement insertion charge is distributed to a content owner based
on the content owner identifier, and
wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information set at
the image content reproducing apparatus and a viewer can select said advertisement image or
reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

20. (Currently Amended) An image content providing apparatus for
providing an image content, said image content providing apparatus comprising:
an image content database for storing said image content;
list forming means having a function of forming a title list which is information of
viewing said image content stored to said image content database and providing said title list;
image providing means having a function of inserting an advertisement image to
said image content of said image database and distributing thereof; and
database registering means for attaching a content identifier to said image content
and storing said image content to said image content database,
wherein an advertisement insertion charge is distributed to a content owner based
on the content identifier, and
wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information and a
viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a
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21. (Currently Amended) An advertisement image providing apparatus having an advertisement image and providing said advertisement image, said advertisement image providing apparatus comprising:

an advertisement image database for storing said advertisement image;

advertisement image selecting means for selecting said advertisement image to be provided from said advertisement image database;

advertisement image providing means having a function of providing said advertisement image selected by said advertisement image selecting means and generating an advertisement providing log which is history information when said advertisement image is selected;

an advertisement providing log database for storing said advertisement providing log; and

advertisement database registering means for attaching an advertisement identifier to said advertisement image and storing said advertisement image to said advertisement image database,

wherein an advertisement insertion charge is distributed to a content owner based on the advertisement identifier, and

wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information and a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

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22. (Currently Amended) An image content reproducing apparatus for reproducing an image content, said content reproducing apparatus comprising:

image acquiring means for acquiring said image content and acquiring an advertisement image inserted to said image content;

image reproducing means having a function of reproducing said image content acquired by said image acquiring means and inserting said advertisement image to said image content based on an advertisement inserting condition data and reproducing thereof; and

image content selecting means for requesting distribution of a title list to an image content providing apparatus according to an inputted instruction and acquiring said title list,

wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information and a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

23-27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) A program storage medium stored with an image content providing program which is a program storage medium stored with an image content providing program for providing an image content, said program storage medium comprising:

list forming means having a function of forming a title list constituting information of viewing said image content stored to said image content database and providing said title list;

image providing means having a function of inserting an advertisement image to said image content of said image content database and distributing thereof; and

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database registering means for attaching a content identifier to said image content
and storing said image content to said image content database,

wherein an advertisement insertion charge is distributed to a content owner based
on the content identifier,

wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information and a
viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a
different category.

29. (Currently Amended) A program storage medium stored with an
advertisement image providing program which is a program storage medium stored with an
advertisement image providing program for providing an advertisement image, said program
storage medium comprising:

advertisement image selecting means for selecting said advertisement image to be
provided from an advertisement image database;

advertisement image providing means having a function of providing said
advertisement image selected by said advertisement image selecting means and generating an
advertisement providing log constituting history information in providing said advertisement
image; and

advertisement database registering means for attaching an advertisement identifier
to said advertisement image and storing said advertisement image to said advertisement image
database,

wherein an advertisement insertion charge is distributed to a content owner based
on the advertisement identifier,

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wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information and a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

30. (Currently Amended) A program storage medium stored with an image content reproducing program which is a program storage medium stored with an image content reproducing program for reproducing an image content, said program storage medium comprising:

image acquiring means for acquiring said image content and acquiring an advertisement image to be inserted to said image content;

image reproducing means having a function of reproducing the image content acquired by said image acquiring means and inserting said advertisement image to said image content based on advertisement inserting condition data and reproducing thereof; and

image content selecting means for requesting distribution of a title list to an image content providing apparatus according to an inputted instruction and acquiring said title list,

wherein the advertisement image is selected based on viewer information and a viewer can select said advertisement image or reject said advertisement image and select a different category.

31. (Canceled)